

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



*New Departures in Industrial Relations : Developments in the U.S., the U.K. and Canada.* Occasional Paper published by British - North American Committee, Toronto, C.D. Howe Institute, April 1988, 74 pp., ISBN 0-89068-092-2

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A second challenge confronting edited volumes is the ability to develop a common framework for the industry studies. The format adopted here is a variant of Dunlop's industrial relations systems model. Although not all contributors were wedded to this approach, there is a broad consistency across studies which gives the book a coherent focus. Additionally, the editors have written an excellent concluding chapter synthesizing the results.

Although many of the changes in collective bargaining at the industry level have been reported elsewhere, this volume represents a valuable addition to the industrial relations literature. There are several reasons for this including: (1) the chapters are well-written and adhere to a common format; (2) the authors are knowledgeable about their industries and have been given the opportunity to update and reassess previous research findings; (3) the volume amply illustrates the diversity in labour relations across industries (e.g., the more far-sighted union response to deregulation in telecommunications than in the airlines and differences in the extent of change in labour-management relationships and work environment in the automobile and tire industries) and the diversity within industries (e.g., variations in concessionary bargaining within airlines and militancy among professional sports unions); and (4) the study also provides ample evidence of common themes across industries, including the negative effect of economic changes on union bargaining power and the decentralization of bargaining structures. One minor disappointment is the limited analysis of contract administration in most chapters. Given the important changes in contemporary collective bargaining and the renewed interest in grievance procedures (e.g., David Lewin and Richard B. Peterson, **The Modern Grievance Procedure in the United States**), the issue should have received greater attention. Aside from these minor quibbles, this is an extremely informative book.

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**New Departures in Industrial Relations: Developments in the U.S., the U.K. and Canada**, An Occasional Paper published by British-North American Committee, Toronto, C.D. Howe Institute, April 1988, 74 pp., ISBN 0-89068-092-2

**New Departures in Industrial Relations** considers whether the drive for competitiveness has replaced «the adversarial practices built up since the 1930's» with «a series of partnerships». No definitive answers are forthcoming but each of the six authors bring thoughtful responses in this concise and useful 61-page pamphlet.

The country studies range over Ben Roberts' (London School of Economics) «new era in British industrial relations» to Thomas Kochan's (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) «great innovation and experimentation» in the United States to Noah Meltz's (University of Toronto) modestly incremental changes in Canada.

Prime Minister Thatcher is reforming British industrial relations by «reducing the level of inflation by privatization and by changing the legal framework to remove some of the long-enjoyed underpinnings of union strength». British employers are stopping short, however, of capitalizing on the Thatcher advantage to employ the American union-free option.

In the U.S. programs in employee participation, work organization reform, new technology and «union participation in strategic management decisions» coexist «with more polarized, distrustful and adversarial» relationships. By contrast with British and American ex-

perience, Canadian industrial relations remains adversarial and the question becomes «whether we have added more cooperation to our essentially adversarial system». Meltz singles out pay equity, first contract arbitration, job and work rule flexibility and the «growth of forums for direct labor-management consultation» as the Canadian innovations.

Phillip Ray studied how the Xerox Corporation and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers joined in quality-of-work-life programs which eventually has to be reoriented to economic stringency. Glyn Hughes describes Britain's Vickers program to strengthen communications under conditions of «radical» economic change to redefine the relationship from «us and them» to «Vickers versus the competition».

Ray draws the lesson that «reworking a relationship to sustain ... competitiveness depends fundamentally upon management's acceptance of union and job security and strategic planning with workers' representatives to resolve issues of cost reduction, workforce flexibility and product quality».

The pamphlet is notable for its brevity, plain spokenness, incisiveness and instructive synthesis. Doers and thinkers alike will profit from its good sense.

**Jack BARBASH**

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## LA SYNDICALISATION DANS LE SECTEUR PRIVÉ AU QUÉBEC

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